THE THIRD DAY

Saturday, the 12th March 1932.

The Assembly met again at 11-30 A. M. the Dewan presiding.

28. Fishing industry.

MR. L. A. NETTO (*Nominated*) spoke about the need for and the ways of promoting fishing industry in the State. The fishing industry which helped to provide food for more than nine-tenths of the population and provided work for about 200,000 persons was second only to agriculture. In some respects it claimed more attention at the hands of the Government than agriculture. While the expansion of agriculture was limited, the possibilities of exploiting the aquatic products were unlimited. Even with the primitive methods of fishing and allied industries, the value of fish products exported from the State every year was about Rs. 41 lakhs, and the customs duty thereon was about a lakh and a quarter rupees. Fishing industry was besides a handmaid to agriculture inasmuch as it supplied fish manure to the ryots.

The methods adopted for fishery and fish curing were primitive. Little progress has been made in equipping fishermen with improved boat, efficient nets and other fishing gear. Modern methods of preserving fish, such as artificial desiccation, refrigeration, canning, smoking and pickling and of manufacturing fish products such as fish oils, fish manures, iodine, vegetable is in glass, etc., were unknown to the fisherfolk of the State. The services of an expert with a thorough knowledge of the principles and practical details of the business were therefore indispensable and the foremost among the ways of developing the industry was the procuring of such an expert. In the member's opinion, an expert from Japan would suit well because the methods adopted in that country were easily adaptable in Travancore. The expert need be appointed only for a fixed term, say six years, and he should in the first instance be an assistant to the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries. At the end of his term a separate Fisheries Department should be organised with three experts qualified in fishing, fish-curing and fish culture. Of these, there was already one expert trained in the second branch. For the other two branches, two more persons preferably from among the fishing community, should be trained in the Imperial Fisheries Institute, Tokyo. One great drawback of the industry was that it was carried on by a backward and economically poor community while the members of the other communities did not take much interest in the industry. Enterprise and private capital were therefore out of the question. The Government therefore had a greater burden in this respect in affording facilities for developing the industry. The following were some of the more urgent requirements:—

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(*1*) *Opening of more fish curing yards.* There were only 11 fish curing yards, the average distance between two yards being 18 miles. Only those in the immediate vicinity of these yards were benefited thereby. Fish cured at the yards fetched a higher price than that cured in other places. Apart from the question of price and the benefit to the producers, in the interests of consumers also, it should be made compulsory that fish should be cured only in public yards instead of in the insanitary dwellings of the fisherfolk. This would be possible only if there was a yard at every fishing village.

(*2*) *Fishery Banks.* The fisherfolk being poor tried to dispose of their goods at the earliest opportunity without waiting till prices went up. The commission agents who sold these goods took advantage of this situation and amassed large profits by buying low and selling high. If banks were opened and money advanced to the fishermen on the security of their goods, they would be able to get better prices and become more prosperous. Cape Comorin, Colachel, Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey were the centres badly in need of such banks.

(*3*) *Appointment of trade agents abroad.* The sale of fish was conducted through commission agents who formed into cliques and offered but very low prices for fish and fish products. It would be advantageous to the exporters if trade agents were appointed by Government at Tinnevelly, Colombo and Rangoon with which places, Travancore carried the bulk of the fish trade, in order to furnish timely and correct information about prices and find out better markets and new lines of business.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Netto, you made more or less the same suggestions last year. They will be very carefully considered. I may add that one of the Fishery Inspectors has been trained in Japan. Last year, the Dewan told you that when funds and circumstances permitted Government would think of getting in more experts.

In the last year's Budget, provision was made for opening two new fish curing yards. That had to be dropped for want of funds. The matter will be considered when the next year's Budget is framed. It is chiefly a question of funds.

A scheme for the institution of a Fishery Loan Fund is now engaging attention. When that is passed, the fishermen will have the credit facilities that you talked about.

29. Remedial measures for the present economic depression in the State.

MR. A. MATEVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum taluk, Group II*) said that a large number of *chitties* were in existence in the State and a large majority of the ryots were subscribers thereto. When the prices of agricultural products were high, these people found it easy to subscribe to the *chitties* regularly. But with the fall in prices and the consequent economic depression, these *chitties* were not properly conducted. Discounts were large and the prize amounts low. The subscribers who had prized the *chitties* defaulted payment. Properties were mortgaged for inconceivably low amounts to

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